

REMARKS

A. Request for Reconsideration

Applicant has carefully considered the matters raised by the Examiner in the outstanding Office Action but remains of the position that patentable subject matter is present. Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration of the Examiner's position based on the amendments to the claims and the following remarks.

B. The Invention

The present invention is directed to a print management server and print management system that ensure efficient printing at a low price.

In one of the novel aspects of the invention, the print management server includes a) a receiving section to receive order data from a customer, b) a production management information preparing section to administrate a production amount and production time for the light sensitive material, c) a production management information transmitting device to transmit the production management information to a light sensitive material manufacturing section, and d) an order data transmitting section to transmit order data to the printing section.

The print management server therefore communicates with both the customer section and the manufacturing section to ensure effective, precise and timely production of light sensitive materials in conformity with the customer order. Since photosensitive materials are ordered by the server in relation to specific customer requests, there is no longer a need to store an excess amount of light sensitive materials in the photofinishing lab as conventionally done in the art. Deterioration of the materials and storage costs are therefore minimized (page 3, par. 3).

C. Claim Status and Amendments

Claims 1-9 are presented for further prosecution.

Claims 1-9 have been amended to replace the word "device" with "section" to more accurately define the present invention. It is believed that no new matter has been added since these amendments do not change the scope of the invention.

D. The Office Action

Claims 1-9 had been rejected as being unpatentable over the admitted prior art in view of Rand (US 5,960,414).

The Examiner had cited Figure 11 and pages 1-3 of the application as an admission that the prior art teaches that a customer can send a request through a network to a

photofinishing lab, where a photosensitive material manufacturer supplies the photofinishing lab with photosensitive materials independent of the customer request.

The Examiner had recognized that the admitted prior art does not teach a print management server which administrates production management information based on the customer order, and transmits the information to the manufacturing section to order photosensitive materials.

Rand had been cited to teach an excess inventory system that monitors inventory within the manufacturing section. The Examiner had taken the position that the combination of the inventory system of Rand with the admitted prior art teaches the present invention.

1. The admitted prior art and Rand do not teach or suggest the production management information preparing section and the production management information transmitting section of the present invention

The print management server of the present invention is capable of coordinating at least four operations. The server a) receives order data from a customer, b) administrates a production amount and production time for the light sensitive material based on the customer order data, c) transmits the production management information to order light sensitive

materials from the manufacturing section, and d) transmits the customer order data to the printing section.

In sum, the server receives a customer request, decides which photosensitive material is required based on the request, orders the photosensitive material from the manufacturer, and initiates printing based on the customer request when the photosensitive material has arrived at the printing section. Image production is simplified since the server coordinates these four operations. In addition, since the server orders photosensitive materials in relation to specific customer requests, it is no longer necessary to stockpile photosensitive materials at the printing section as conventionally done in the art.

As the Examiner acknowledged, the admitted prior art teaches that it is known to receive customer orders as in a) above, but the admitted prior art does not teach b) and c) above. Namely, the admitted prior art does not teach a server that b) manages production of light sensitive materials based on the customer order and c) transmits the management information to the manufacturing section to order photosensitive materials. Applicant respectfully submits that an addition of the inventory system of Rand to the admitted prior art does not cure these defects.

Rand teaches a monitoring system for a manufacturing section that determines the percentage of inventory that is designated for use by a customer or another channel. Rand then calculates how much material should be ordered to maintain a consistent number of material in the inventory (col. 4, lines 41-67).

The inventory system of Rand operates within the manufacturing section. More material is ordered when the inventory is low, less is ordered when the inventory is high. The inventory system of Rand does not communicate with the customer or with the printing section. In contrast to the present invention, the inventory system of Rand does not a) receive order data from a customer, b) manage production of the light sensitive material based on the customer order data, and c) transmit the production information to the manufacturing section to order photosensitive materials.

With regard to a), Rand determines whether more or less material should be ordered to maintain a consistent inventory. This determination is not made based on a specific customer request. In contrast, the server of the present invention places the material order based on the order data received by the customer as recited in claims 1 and 6. The server of the present invention therefore communicates with the customer, while the inventory system of Rand does not. Applicant

respectfully submits that a combination of Rand and the admitted prior art does not teach the present invention.

Second, as explained in b) above, Rand does not manage production of the light sensitive material based on the customer order data as recited in claims 1 and 6. In other words, Rand does not determine how many and at what time the photosensitive material is needed based on the customer request. Rand is incapable of performing this function, since the inventory system of Rand does not receive the customer order. Rand therefore cannot match the customer order to a specific type of photosensitive material, since Rand never receives the order. Applicant believes that this is a second reason why the present invention is not taught by a combination of Rand and the admitted prior art.

With regard to c) above, Applicant submits that the admitted prior art and Rand do not teach the production management information transmitting section of the present invention. This section transmits the production information from the server to another location, such as the manufacturing section to order photosensitive material. The inventory system of Rand does not transmit information to the manufacturing section, since the inventory system of Rand is within the manufacturing section. Applicant therefore respectfully submits that the admitted prior art and Rand do not teach or suggest

transmitting production management information from the server to another location as recited in claims 1 and 6.

In summary, Applicant notes that the Examiner had acknowledged that the admitted prior art does not teach a server that manages production of light sensitive materials based on the customer order, and transmits the management information to the manufacturing section to order photosensitive materials. It is believed that Rand does not cure these defects, since the inventory system of Rand does not directly communicate with the customer, since the inventory system of Rand does not determine how many and at what time the photosensitive material is needed based on the customer request, and since the inventory system of Rand does not transmit information from the inventory system to another location.

Applicant therefore respectfully submits that the present invention is patentable over Rand and the admitted prior art.

E. Conclusion

In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that the application is in condition for allowance and such action is respectfully requested. Should any extensions of time or fees

be necessary in order to maintain this Application in pending condition, appropriate requests are hereby made and authorization is given to debit Account # 02-2275.

Respectfully submitted,

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